

THE
Clothiers Complaint:
OR
REASONS
FOR
Passing the BILL,
Against the
Blackwell-Hall Factors, &c.

Shewing it to be a
PUBLICK GOOD:
Humbly Offer'd to the
PARLIAMENT.

Ad sanitatem gradus est, novisse morbum, Eras.

LONDON,
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Clothes Company

REASON

FOR

Buying the Bill

Blackwell-Hall Factors

Showing to be

PUBLIC GOOD

Number 100 to 110

23917

100 D.C.

Printed for Richard Taylor, near St. James's Church

TO endeavour to shew how great an Influence the Woollen-Manufacture hath upon the value of Lands and good payment of Rents in the Country, would be a needless undertaking to so prudent a Council, and but lighting a Candle to the Sun.

And since the unanswerable Experience of twenty years last past, hath manifest an alteration in those affairs, and that there is an apparent fall in the rates of Lands in the general; and since it is as evident that the Woollen-Manufacture is the principal branch of our Trade, and only Staple Commodity of our *English* Nation, which gives life and motion to all other Trades. It can be no needless enquiry to examine, whether there be any unnecessary Letts sprung up in so long a Track of Time, which may either check or retard the free course of this Master-wheel of our Trade, serving a private Interest at the expence of the Publick.

Or whether the Profit arising out of the Woollen-Manufacture be equally divided between the Country and the City, as it justly belongs.

I shall wholly confine my self (in this Address) to my own Province in plain matters of fact, and make it my task to shew, that there is a defect in both these particulars, which now offers to be redrest in our Bill. Wherein, altho' my capacity will not reach to the height of the matter, yet it may give some light, and make way for better Judgment: And herein (being invaded in point of right) I hope I may depend upon the most favourable construction, being an act of necessity, and not of choice.

The substance and intent of our Bill being only this.

1. *That Blackwell-Hall, the common Market of England for Cloth, shall be wholly at the liberty of Clothiers, to sell their Cloth to Merchants, and Woollen Drapers, according to ancient Customs. And the Factors of Blackwell-Hall, who hath now got the possession of the said*

said Hall, shall be dispossess'd, and a freedom to Clothiers to send up Servants out of the Country (under restrictions from buying of Wool, and settled Sallaries) for the accommodation of the Market, where it appears needful.

2. That all Cloth that is brought to London, shall be ipso facto, sold in the publick Market of Blackwell-Hall, in the proper time already appointed for that purpose, and as it is now under Obligation to be there enter'd, and to pay a certain Duty to the Hall.

3. That all Cloth made of Pinions and Noyles, or of any worse quality than Fleece-Wool, shall be made with a distinction, that the Buyer may not be deceived.

4. That all true Fleece-Wool-Cloth, that is made, shall be mark'd with the Letters ~~XXX~~ Crown'd.

5. That all long Cloths, of what County soever, shall be made of one limited length; which is the full import of our Bill.

The design of this Bill being solely a publick Good, and that which concerns the general Interest of the Nation, I hope will be impartially considered by every generous English-Man, and true Patriot of his Country, whose protection it justly claims, so far as it hath that appearance.

It doth indeed immediately concern the Clothiers, by whom, were the matter left to be decided by a majority, it would be but a short contest: And we usually say, that he that wears the Shooe knows best where it pincheth: As general, I think in the sense of the Calamity, as the consult of Mice in the Fable, but too much of the timorousness of those little Animals, ready to shrink back, at the difficulty of putting on the Bell, being so far brought under Dominion.

And altho' the Clothiers are a considerable number of Men in the Nation, yet belonging to different Counties, and for the most part engaged in such business that requires constant attendance, they cannot so well wait upon publick affairs of Parliament, as those that are always together upon the place, to consult, and have plenty of Money to forward any publick Affairs, the command, as well of their Masters Purse as their own. But if this Bill hath the impress of a publick Good upon it, I persuade my self it will not be obstructed with Shadows.

A long discourse from a bauling Factor, in disguise of a Merchant, in commendation of Pinion-Cloth, when he himself is sinking

sinking in the same bottom, may be of as little signification to the Publick, as from a condemn'd Person at *Tyburn*; it being so well known to be a deceitful sort of Cloth, but possibly a better subject than the justification of his own practice: Both which may chance to pass for good reason under the tender affection of a Daughter.

Nor can the *Yorkshire* Interest, whose Pinion Cloth hath of late Years sheltered it self in imitation of *Glocestershire*, and other Fleece-Wool-Cloth, and unwilling to appear in its own guise, be of any real signification in this affair, whatsoever influence they may have upon their Members.

And the least colour of opposition from the Merchant may be confirmation enough to the Country Gentleman, that the motion comes from the spring of his own Interest, who be sure would not oppose the Bill, if Cloth thereby was not like to be the dearer to him.

And I hope the Land-Taxes in the Country at this time may as justly claim a consideration, as the support of the splendor and gallantry of a Factors Coach in the City — But to proceed to the merit of our Bill.

1. In the first place, we are dispossest of our right in the common Market of *Blackwell-Hall*. The spacious buildings of *Blackwell-Hall*, equally accommodated to Trade, were altogether design'd for the benefit of Clothiers, to sell their Cloth to Merchants and Woollen-Drapers; and until about thirty years last past, so practis'd.

By act of Common-Council of the City, most Cloth that is brought to *London*, must be enter'd at *Blackwell-Hall*, and pay a Duty, which must be ground'd upon reason; and that the Clothier shall have an accommodation for his Money: The foundation Rule of Buying and Selling in this publick Market, is, that no Freeman of the City of *London*, shall have liberty to sell any Goods there; and that none but Freeman shall have liberty to buy any Cloth.

This course of Trade is now wholly diverted in the Selling part, and all the Windows of *Blackwell-Hall*, that are convenient to shew Cloth, are taken up by Factors, many of which are Freeman, and the Clothier excluded from the Sale of his own Goods, and dispossest of his ancient right.

2. In

2. In the next place, of the Factors themselves, whose coming into *Blackwell-Hall* is well in memory, of about thirty Years standing; they gained their best footing in the sickness time and fire of *London*. Mischiefs seldom come alone. In number about thirty, and very few of this number that hath any just right to the practice they now follow; having served Apprenticeships to other Trades. For your accommodation (altho' the number is not great) you may make choice of a Factor sprung from almost any profession, an Oyl man, a Cloth-drawer, a Tobacconist, &c.

The regular Factors, their Apprentices, most of them make a short flourish, and then break. I think there may be a Factor found in the same place, who hath had three or four Apprentices successively broke. The pleasantness of their living, exceeds any Trade that I know of; only one morning in a week that requires their exact attendance: Great leisure the remaining part to settle the publick affairs of the Nation, (having several Apprentices to perform the laborious parts) in which (being become the chief Master of the Woollen-Manufacture and such opportunities by insinuating Letters of Commerce) they have had no small stroke.

** Quin Laniunt mundum
tantia est discordia fra-
trum, E. versus F. by the
Interest of S. Chapman.*

3. The disposal of a piece of Cloth containing twenty two yards, and in value Six or Seven Pounds; the Factoridge is four Shillings: All other charge of Post-Letters, Hallidge, Porteridge, Pressing, &c. to be paid by the Clothier; which is now brought up very near to the value of the Factoridge. In an accompt of the sale of two pieces of Cloth, where the Factoridge was eight Shillings; the extraordinary charge brought it up to sixteen Shillings six Pence.

In another accompt of the sale of nine pieces of Cloth, the extraordinary charge reckoned by the Factor, was twelve Pence a piece more than his Factoridge; and the Cloth sold twelve Pence a Yard under the Clothier's price he left them at; both matters of Fact, and to be proved.

The new pressing of Cloth is become an intolerable burden upon the Clothiers; and the returning of Cloth after bought, grown so familiar of late Years, that there is no certainty in a sale many times in three Weeks or a Month; which practice

pradice hath been brought on by the Factor, with many more that at this time will be too tedious to mention.

The next part of the Factor's profit is out of the Wool that makes the Cloth, which is usually three Pence a Pound out of the *Spanish* Wool, and five Shillings a Pack out of the *English* Wool; the best part of his gains.

All the *Spanish* Wool that is brought into *London*, is generally bought up by the Factors: What comes into *Exeter*, they many times get into their Hands; and hath bought a considerable quantity at *Bristol*; and sold it at three Pence a Pound profit to their Clothiers, who have lived but ten or fifteen Miles distant from that place: Matter of Fact, and the certainty of this profit is admirable.

If they make a bad Debt for the Clothier, it is no rule for the loss of their Factoridge; a stated case, and always Effects in their hands to make good for the Wool; and I am satisfied the greatest part of it is paid for with the Clothiers own Money, having many times considerable credit from the Merchant. The disposal of it afterwards is no less remarkable, where one Bag in five is not seen by the Clothier before sent down, and the Price entered to his account when sent; so that the whole of one Factors Profit hath been computed at 2000 l. per annum. How far this extraordinary Charge, upon the commanding Commodity of our *English* Nation, is consistent with a Publick Good, I leave to better Judgments.

4. But farther, they are become Clothiers as well as Factors; as Brewers become Maulsters, and have their Agents in all Countries to make Cloth for them; this chiefly encouraged in conjunction with the Interest of the Wool-broger: And here I cannot give a full account of this Affair, without taking notice of the Packer, who is come in for a share; and indeed an excellent contrived Platform!

The sale of Cloth in *London* is wholly in the hands of Factors and Packers, and the Merchants being possess'd, that they have a greater benefit thereby, than if they bought it of the Clothiers. It hath been usual for a considerable Merchant to leave the buying of four or five hundred Cloths to a considerable Packer, and take his account made up to his hand; the Packer, being under several Obligations to the Merchant, in point of his own Trade, will be sure to be more of his side than the Clothiers, yet not so steady.

ready, but that an immediate Interest may a little byass; as appears by the suddain and prodigious flight that happen in our days.

The Wool-brogers being become the greatest buyers of Wool in England, all *Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Sussex*, being wholly in their hands, and a great share of other Counties; the nearer to Clothing Pates than to *London*, the best way afterwards to dispose this Wool, is to such Clothiers that they can command; but there being no conveniency without its inconveniency, too great a hazard in such a Trade, and a farther conveniency in helping of a sorry Commodity, they come to this agreement with the Factor or Packer, that if either of these can help them to a Clothier that will take off their Wool, and afterwards sell the Cloth for him, and secure him their Money for the Wool, that they shall have such a constant Salary out of every pack of Wool, sent him down; which is easily enough agreed upon, over a Glass of Wine, being all at *Dorset*.

The Packer can easily forward the Sale of any Man's Cloth, and will not be wanting, being continually minded by a certain Interest.

The Factor hath so much out of the Wool, and so much Factoridge out of every Cloth, and he will take care to furnish with Oyl, and a little Money Weekly to pay the Work People, and the utmost of his endeavors will not be wanting to keep this Wheel going, and no better shelter for small faults, than a certain Interest. This practice hath so far prevail'd, that above a quarter of Merchants Cloth is made in this Channel, I know not whether mistaken, if I had said half. This unhappy mischief solely introduc'd by the separation of the Merchant and Clothier. And want of Judgment in Cloth, in the Merchant, which likewise springs from the same cause; whilst Merchants bought their Cloth at *Blackwel-Hall*, and examined it at their own Houses, which was the practice of former time: this maintain'd Experience and Judgment in Cloth, which is not to be procur'd and maintain'd but by such a frequent use; and for encouragement herein, our Cloth is a cleanly Commodity, and pleasant to be felt; but, quoth the Proverb, *A Man's own business never dirt his fingers*: And the Apprentice which had always a hand in pooling the Cloth over the Perch, was hereby bred up to knowledge in the Cloth Trade, and when he kept the Cash at home, and paid the

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Clothier, his hand was full of business, and much under the Master's Eye; and how many young Mens ruine hath been owing to this alteration of Trade? who, instead thereof, get a habit of Idleness. I shall not specify, but upon serious reflection it will appear to be a melancholy Thought. And the Cloth being now wholly managed at Packers Houses, and they sensible enough of their own Interest, the next set of Merchants will think, that Judgment in Cloth is no part of the Merchants Trade.

It can be no great credit to be confin'd to Spectacles in the prime time of a Man's Age; especially such a sort that are liable to be dazzled by the least white Mist, which will make a Cloth made of thin hungry *Kentish* Wool, look with such a thick body, that it shall exceed a Cloth made of *Somersetshire*, *Wiltshire*, or *Hampshire* Wool, which is much of a superiour quality. I thought some time since, that it would be an advantage in the Sale of Cloth, to write upon it, that it was made of *London* Wool, finding that sort so much prefer'd. And I think, *Crede quod habes & habes*, hath made a greater progress in the Woollen Manufacture than in Religion.

5. And this leads me to shew how this practice hath prevail'd to the imbasing of our Cloth. Good Wine, we say, needs no Bush; and before these Factors Days and Trade came into this Channel, it was a usual Saying, that the Clothier needed not a Merchant, if his Cloth was good; and the chiefeft care was to maintain a credit in Trade; A Cloth-mark reckon'd of a considerable value, which was the undoubted Interest of the Nation.

The Clothier that made the Cloth, sold it to the Merchant, and heard the faults of his own Cloth; and forc'd sometimes, not only to promise amendment himself, but to go home and tell Joan, to have the Wool better pick'd, and the Yarn better Spun.

The Wool was usually bought in the Summer, and a good Stock of Goods seen in the Clothiers hand, which is a great encouragement to the making of good Cloth; and Wool held up, in those days to a Price that the former had intouragement.

This great Wheel of Trade, that is now kept going, must go swiftly round against a Shipping, the Cloths like the Sons of *Cadmus*, of a nimble Birth; the Wool sent from *London* this Week, and returned in Cloth in five or six Weeks, which is the delight of a Factor, and proportionably as slow, as soon as buy-

ing is over; the allotment of Wool to a Cloth, in the first place, by the Agent in the Country, is very scanting: To which being added, the condition of it from a moist Cellar, and bad ways carrying down, great part coming down in the Winter, must needs afford but a lean Commodity: laid in the Loom nine quarters and an half wide, which formerly was laid twelve quarters, and as much Cloth drest by two Men, as could be done by four, was the Cloth well made, and had its defects: No care in the Country, but a quick dispatch to *London* to the Factors, and how to make an addition to the small Salary, by putting off all sorts of Commodities to the Work-People, which is come almost to a general practice in this way of Trade, possibly five shillings in Money, and fifteen in Commodities.

¶ This brings to Market ten Cloths, with the same Wool that formerly made but nine, which always keeps a stock at Market, and therein answers the Merchants end in beating down the Price: And as it affects the Publick in the loss of our Reputation abroad, it likewise immediately concerns us at home in the Price of Wool. In fifty thousand Cloths that are likely to be sent to *Turky*, which contain in the Water thirty six yards each Cloth, and strain'd to forty four, and as great a proportion in breadth (a great disparagement to our Reputation and mischief to the Publick;) there wants six or eight pounds of Wool one Cloth with the other, to make the same yards of Cloth to the goodness they were of in former times, when the Clothiers sold their own Cloth: This quantity of Wool remaining upon the Farmer's hand, which should have been in the same yards of Cloth, must needs make an odds in the Price of Wool; and had that quantity of Wool been added to the same yards of Cloth, the Cloth had been double the value of the said Wool better, in the true merit and service of it; And whatsoever may be said of new Drapery, and humouring of Markets abroad, otherwise than in Breadths to answer the Habits of all Countries, I take to be nothing but private Interest. And that Statute of the Fourth of *James* the First, Chapter the Second, holding Cloth to a weight, was very agreeable with the true Interest of the Nation: the weight of Cloth being duly proportioned to its length and goodness, according to good advice, especially in low Price Merchants Cloth; and ought again to be considered how valuable the Reputation of any Commodity is, to its in-

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couragement abroad, is plainly seen by the single instance of the *Colchester Bays*, which carry the Trade in all Parts abroad, by their due care in preserving the merit and goodness of them; and indeed Reputation can come from no other ground.

6. But the most material Mischief that the Country suffers under, wholly introduc'd by the Factor, is the long credit given with Cloth.

The standard Rule with most Cloth that is Sold, is six Months; which, if paid in nine, is not thought bad payment, many times not in twelve, sometimes fifteen.

To support this extorted and preposterous Credit, and drive Trade round too, the whole Country is forc'd to raise its *posse Comitatus*, and like a string of Horses in a Team, many times forc'd to lend their assistances at a dead lift. The Clothier's Stock, and the utmost of his Credit first goes, then the Card-maker, the Weaver, strain their Credit to the utmost: Afterwards the Butcher and the Chandler lend as far as they think safe: And the Farmer strains his Landlords patience as far as ever he can; and if *Michaelmas Rent* be cleared at *Lady day*, he is a very good Tenant.

In former days, a Clothier was reckon'd to be able to keep one broad Loom well employ'd, with fifty pounds, if he bought his Yarn; or if he made his Cloth out of the Wool, with one hundred pounds, which now is not to be done with three hundred pounds in this way of Trade; and the Clothier turn'd his Stock three times in those days for once now: He Sold his Cloth to the *Merchant*, and receiv'd his Money, and went out of Town again in two or three days; it was then thought a reflection upon the *Merchant* that he dealt with, if he tarried longer, supposing he waited for his Money. *Hec quantum mutatus ab illo!* Now three Weeks waiting upon a Factor or Packer for a little Money, all swallowed up in the great City, and the Country starved; and this chiefly introduc'd by the design of the Factor, to keep the Clothier from buying Wool of the *Merchant*, or where he hath no advantage by it.

This Credit doth not spring from a real want of Money to buy Cloth; there be many *Merchants* and *Woollen-Drapers* that now buy Cloth and make good payment, that would buy twice as much, and do the like, if the Trade was more in their hands,

which would be the consequence, if the Clothiers sold their own Cloth; and hereby there would be a greater Stock of Money drawn into the Cloth Trade, than would be withdrawn by the Factors and Wool-brogers; and whatsoever Clothier was ingenious at his Trade, he would find more favour hence, if his Stock was small, than he hath now from a Factor.

The Factors by this designed Credit, hath carried the Cloth Trade into too wide a distance (I wish it be brought safe home:) Few old Clothiers knew any such place as *Wapping*, where a pair of Shoes may now be worn out a dunning for the Money of two or three Pieces of Cloth: And indeed, a great shame that the best Commodity of our *English* Nation should be thus undervalued.

Whatsoever Commodity is bought by the *Merchant* besides Cloth, as Tin and Lead, they meet with good payment, and the Cloth found the easiest place to lean upon: And no part of the Wollen-Manufacture, that is sold according to the Will of the Maker, but meets with good payment, *Colchester-Bays, Stuffs, Serges, Perpetuana's, &c.*

But here is another Snake in the Grass, lurking in this Credit, which is very prejudicial to the Country, and possibly little observed; the *Clothier's* Stock being got into the *Merchant's* hand, and no Money to be raised out of any Goods he hath upon hand at Shear-time: The *Merchants* hereby govern the *Clothiers* at that time as they please, and thereby govern the Price of Wool. We always find it the difficult time to get Money out of the *Merchants* hand at Shear-time. If the *Clothier* had his Money in his own hand, he hath several reasons to lay it out at that time, and this of greater moment than observation, whatsoever pretence for Credit may be made on the *Merchants* side, by their long Voyages to *Turky*, the contrary for many years past hath appear'd, in their deferring their Shippings, for their advantage in Buying and Selling; nimble Shippings would make nimble returns, and very much for the good of the Publick; and the inconveniencies they found by giving Credit with their Goods in *Turky*, hath made positive order against it. And the hazard the *Clothier* run with his Estate, in the present management of Trade, is not the least of his misfortunes; in great part of the Cloth that is sold, he is in two hazards, besides the Principle, the Factor and Packer, whose Receipt to the *Merchant* is a full discharge.

7. And this leads me, humbly to offer a short account of our Calamities from our broken Factors, omitting the bad Debet̃ that they have been the Authors of, which are unaccountable. And here could I first summon the *Clothiers* of *Sheppen-mallet*, to give an exact account of their Factor *Stroud*, and the unexpected disappointment of their support of old Age, after a laborious Trade: Or the Creditors of *Duncorne*, to set out the variety of his footsteps, it would be a melancholy History: Or did I insist upon fresher Instances, I should find as many Creditors belonging to one broken Factor, as *St. Paul* received stripes from the *Jews*: I can't but wish their Guilt in the place of his Innocency, and each Creditor the content of one stripe, according to the *Jewish* Law; and farther add, that had the first broken Factor been deservedly Whipt, we had never had one Factor broke three times, which practice is grown so familiar, these late years, and so afflicting to careful Traders, I think it deserves consideration in the general, and a Law wanting in such cases, especially where there can be no fair accompt given of misfortunes; it being impossible for a Factor to break, or meet with any loss, and no more excuse than spending forty shillings a Week, when his Wages was but twenty. The time would fail me to keep to particulars herein, and our Losses beyond my Arithmetick: or should I endeavour to set forth the variety of Abuses that hath been practiced in this way of Trade, their placing bad Debts to Accompt as they see fit, pretending Credit sometimes when ready Money received, and the like, it would be too large a task to enter upon, and, which adds to the Calamity, the mischief is like to encrease with their number, which is like to double every seven years; some of them having two or three Apprentices. I have given an account of the current profit of our Factors, and now of another sort, that we parted with to our loss; we are likewise liable to a third sort, which I think are *Latitudinarian* Factors; these will be sure to Cheat as oft as they have opportunity. Should a Clothier die and leave an Estate in one of these Factors hands, and make a disposal according to his own Judgment, of his Estate, he will be very likely to make a *Wickham's* Will; in which particular, we are not without a considerable instance: And thus much of our Factors.

I come now to the second part of my promise; as likewise to the second part of our Bill, to shew that there is an unequal division.

vision of the Profit arising out of the Woollen Manufacture between the Country and the City.

The growth and perfection of the Woollen-Manufacture being intirely owing to the Country, and the Shepherds care, the chief spring of our Riches and Treasure. The King, as *Solomon* tells us, being Fed by the Field, and the Riches of Foreign Parts not to be procur'd and brought home, but by a Value sent hence, which is wholly comprehended in the Fleece; a fair share of the Profit arising out of the Woollen-Manufacture, cannot be denied to the Country. And there can be no equal division of this Profit between the Country and the City, but by a fair Sale of the Woollen-Manufacture in a publick Market, where each Interest may fairly struggle, as in all Buying and Selling, and be upon equal ground to the least tittle, which is the nicest part of Trade; discretion and prudence in timing of Affairs in a Market or Fair, doth many times give the Buyer an advantage, when his occasion is as urgent for the Commodity, as the Seller for his Money; and Experience shews us, that when there happens the least disproportion on each side, the Commodity either sinks or riseth. In all Trades the Seller, where the Interest is his own) consults his Reason to make the most of his Commodity, and for his Government, diligently observeth what demand there is for his Goods: The Buyer on the other hand, useth his Industry to get as good a penniworth as he can, and observeth the Plenty of the Commodity and number of Chapmen, &c. and between these honest and equal contests, a full satisfaction on both sides doth fairly center; in a little ebbing and flowing, if a little ground lost before a Shipping, recovered again when the Shipping comes; And for the just preservation hereof, the care of our Ancestors hath not appear'd in any thing more, than that publick Markets for Buying and Selling should be duly preserved, that there should be no Fore-stalling Commodities coming to Market, &c. and the strict care of the City of *London*, that all Cloth shall be brought to this publick Market of *Blackwell-Hall*, seems to come from the same consideration.

The Woollen-Manufacture now being so considerable a part of our livelihood in the Country, and the value of Wool having so great an effect upon the value of Land, and the Market of *Blackwell-Hall*, the most considerable Market of *England* for our Cloth, there ought to be a fair adjustment of the Rules of
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this common Market, between the Country and City, with all imaginable caution, and as strict an injunction to the performance, that the Seller may be upon equal ground with the Buyer.

And the ancient Rules of this Market of *Blackwel-Hall*, settled in former time, seems to be a fair accommodation between Country and City.

Many of the Clothiers having a considerable Journey of an hundred miles to this Market, it seems to me to be considered in the timing of the Market, allowing the first part of the Week for the Journey. This Market to begin upon *Thursday* morning eight of the Clock, to continue until eleven of the Clock, and then shut up, to begin in the Afternoon at two of the Clock, and continue until four, and then shut up: In like manner, all day upon *Friday*, and *Saturday* morning until eleven of the Clock, then to be lock'd up, and no more open'd upon any occasion of Trade, until the next Week Market: and no Cloth any where else in Town to be bought at the first hand, but at *Blackwell-Hall*; which I think to be very well proportion'd in time between Buyer and Seller: This kept the *Merchants* to some dispatch with the *Clothier*, and he fairly saw what demand there was for Cloth.

The duty paid at the Hall for the Entry of every Cloth, was, I think, one Penny a Cloth; and what Cloth was not sold by the Clothier (if he had no mind to wait another Market, which was very unusual in those days) was plac'd up in the Store-Houses, which are provided for that purpose, until the Clothier came up again, or he order'd some other Clothier to act in kindness for him; and I think, free of all Charge, or at least ought to be; the fatigue of so tedious a Journey, and the considerable advantage the City of *London* make in other particulars, may fairly deserve the free accommodation of a Market; and the practice of all Cities and Towns in *England* confirm the same. A well made piece of Cloth, brought to its perfection, contains more merit and beauty than to be expos'd to the least inconvenience: and not the least allowance to be made in this particular, which, I hope, will be fairly adjusted.

I will now give a true and impartial Account, of the present management of the sale of Cloth, and the practice of this common.

mon Market of *Blackwell-Hall*, to the best of my knowledge.

All Cloth, according to ancient Custom, is here Enter'd, and pay a Duty, I think, one Penny a Cloth, tho' many times carried directly to Packers Houses, and what Cloth is continued in the Hall, pay one half-penny a Week for each Piece of Cloth, which is now very considerable, by reason of so many Factors, who are willing to grace their Standings with as fair a shew of choice as they can, but all of them reckon'd to the Clothier, in the upper Hall, where it is most considerable: The Store-Houses of the said Hall are let out to Factors for their accommodation, at a yearly Rent, some to other purposes, to hold Linnen, Yarn, or the like: What Money ariseth out of this publick Market, by these ways and means, more than will defray the charge of necessary attendance, is monthly paid into *Christ Church Hospital*, being very considerable, and dispos'd of as the City Charity; from which Charity, and the considerable difficulty that arises from the due adjustment of the limits of so many standings of the Factors, and supplying the vacancies that happen, with all the justice that may be, amongst so many Pretenders: There are several Governours appointed by the City, to hear and determine all Occurrences of that nature that happen; and which is a little remarkable, there are some Factors got up into this Government, whether in Compliment to the Clothiers, or whether from the scarcity of such grave qualified Persons, for so weighty a purpose, I know not; however, I think too great Favorites of the City to be strenuous Contenders for the true Interest of the Country, in keeping up the Price of Cloth, and from hence, little appearance of Success at this Court, from any application that might be made by the Clothiers against the Factors.

But notwithstanding all these creditable and good effects of so considerable and publick a Market, *Blackwell-Hall* is no more in effect than a Store-House, and a place that the command of the City obligeth Cloth to be enter'd at; and the continuance of the Market from *Thursday* to *Saturday* of no more signification than the preserving an ancient Custom: Here are a considerable number of Woollen-Drapers upon *Thursday* morning, to see what fresh Cloth is come up, or whether any thing new, but under no necessity of the Market, having been courted the day before with all the fresh Patterns of the Cloth, coming up by the Factors, a destructive practice to Trade in the general: And upon any day of
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the Week, can go to any Factors House or Store-House, and buy what Cloth they please; nor indeed is the Sale of Cloth to these Woollen-Drapers in this publick Market of any real signification, for they constantly return half the Cloth that is there bought without giving a reason. This practice encouraged by a little private Profit (I doubt) that hereby accrues to the Factor, by going snips in the new pressing, a very unequal practice to the Maker; hereby if their judgment do a little err in the Market, it's certainly rectifi'd by compare at home, and a consult of Assistants: And a nice distinction in the true value of Cloth or Wool, is not obtain'd without diligent observation, and the Clothier must be at a loss, if his judgment in the least fail him in the publick Market, in his Wool, whilst he hath not the fair play of a publick Market to balance it, and the return of Cloth by the Woollen-Draper, after lain in his Shop a Fortnight or three Weeks, which is now very usual, is very prejudicial to the Clothier in point of fancy in Colour; the Woollen-Draper hereby informs himself by his Customers that come in, whether the Colour will please or not, and there being a necessity of variety to humour the present genius of the World, this fancy ought to be decided by single judgment in a publick Market; especially since it's evident, that our Woollen-Cloth, by this fancy and variety is become more useful; and experience shews us, that a well-made Piece of true Scarlet, strip'd with a good fancy in Black, may give a challenge to the whole World in the lining of a Chariot, not only for its true usefulness and service, but equal lustre and beauty: And if fancy was ever regulated by the true Interest of the Nation, it may gain a greater advantage in Beds: No humour so gay, but here may be variety to answer it; which inconveniency to the Clothiers (had I not already balanced with the Factors) I might fairly place to their accompts. And for the *Merchants Trade for Turkey*, there is no shadow of that at *Blackwell Hall*; or if any *Merchant* incline to buy Cloth at his own House, so many samples are presently sent in by Factors, that Plenty makes him Poor, and he knows not which to gratifie. A Clothier may now stand by his Cloth in the best place he can find at *Blackwell-Hall*, one Market after another, like an Owl in the Desert, and never see a *Merchant*, which will soon enough attract a Kite or an Hawk, a Packer or a Factor, both which are Birds of Prey, in buying of Cloth to sell it again, and the Clothier wholly becomes an uncon-

cerned Person in the Sale of his own Goods; as if he came from some remote part of the World, and could not speak *English*, and knew not how to dispose his own time, were it not for some sociable Tabacconist-Shops, whom Custom, and a little Profit, hath made a familiar entertainment; his Spirits kept up by the hopes of his Factor, who once a day will come to him, and shake him by the hand, and acquaint him, he is in hopes of a good Chapman, at a little abatement, and encourage a Compliance; but after all, the *Merchant* is gone out of Town for ten days, but doubt not of the full Price when he comes to Town, and a little Money advanc'd upon the old account, and *Exit*.

The Clothier must be at a loss for a *Merchant*, if the publick Market will not afford him one, and must be beholding to some inferior assistance. The *Merchant* would come to the publick Market, if he was not satisfied that this practice of buying of Cloth was more for his profit. And if the Packer and Factor, who have the Sale of the Cloth, be more of the *Merchants* side than the Clothiers, how far may this prevail, by degrees, to the beating down of the Price of Cloth? The Packer's House, in which there is a greater Trade for *Merchants* Cloth, than the publick Market of *Blackwell-Hall*, is only free to such *Merchants* as are his friends; supposing some great Packer, of Interest and Cunning, should get into his hands most of the choicest Cloth of a Country, which may be easily done, if some considerable *Merchants* will stick by him, and they agree together, that this Cloth shall wholly come into their hands; may not this be some kind of Monopoly; and some *Merchants* out-do others? I am sure hereby a few great Packers grow vastly rich and impoverish others. Experience shews us, that as Trade is now managed, the *Merchant* never makes any advance in a dull time of Trade. The Packers many times prevail with their Clothiers to die Cloth upon their account in the Summer, when there hath been a little prospect of Trade in the Winter; at which time drying is hazardous, in which, if a miscarriage, it lights upon the Clothier, and the longer time, at last, for payment, to be procured by the *Merchant*; and no Citizen but understands the value of Money, Seven per Cent. to the Exchequer, or otherwise. That which fool'd *Bellarmino* in Transubstantiation, and he could never get over, is, at this time made good by some great Packers and Factors: They have the same Clothiers at work for them in two places

places at the same time; they work for them in the Country, with their hands, and in their Closets, by their Tallies, which is a Substance that equally effects the same end. This great City (were it not for the support of life,) I think, would like *Polyphemus*, devour the Country *. This being the present management of the Sale of our Woollen-Manufacture, in undeniable matters of Fact, I shall not further insist upon the unequal division of the Profit between the Country and the City. A blot in Game is no blot until hit, and if the younger Brother hath out-witted the elder —

Homo homini lupus.

I come now, in all submission, to the third part of our Bill, the marking of Pinion-Cloth.

That Cloth made of Pinions and Noyles, is of a worse quality than Cloth made of perfect Fleece-Wool, admits no dispute, the one being made of the *Holding* Staple of the Wool, the other with the Flocky part of the Wool, that is separate from the long Staple. The quantity of Pinions that usually arise out of this long Wool, is about two pound in twelve, in an ordinary way of making them.

In the next place, when this Pinion-Cloth is made up, and Hot-press'd, the wariest Buyer is liable to be deceived.

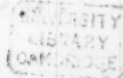
The resolution of former Parliaments, in this particular, may be of some moment to confirm the reasonableness of it now, as in several Statutes appears, it was not admitted into Broad-Cloth; and the narrow Cloth to have one black List, and the other a plain Selvage, as appears by the Statute of *King James the First* *. The quantity of these Pinions is, much increas'd, as the Trade of Stuffs and Serges: But if the care of our Ancestors was such, in a less quantity, to preserve our reputation abroad, the same reason is certainly strengthened by its increase: But for farther confirmation, I will here insert a particular Character that I saw of its reputation from *Smyrna*, which was, That the *Levant* Company had better buy up the raskally Pinion-Cloth, and set it on Fire, than send it thither.

* *Anno quarto Jacobi cap. 2.*

By another publick Declaration, from the same place, it appears, that several Persons that bought quantities of it were undone by it. One *Cariboyle*, an *Armenian*, turned *Turk*, to have the benefit of the Laws of *Turky*, against an *English Merchant* that sold him a quantity of it, and recovered one hundred and eighty Dollars. * — *Albyn's Case.*

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Its reputation abroad, when experienc'd, farther appears by its shifting at home, and appearing at Market, like *Protem*, in changeable Shapes of all the Letters of the Alphabet.

And if *homo trium hominum*, was a character of eminence of old, what must four and twenty make? ——— *homo trium literarum* to the publick.

And that this Cloth may be well suited with Buttons, I can't but recommend *Bengall-Silk*, (the kindness of the *East-India* Company, in return of our Bullion) being near of a quality for service. The unhappy effects of which sufficiently appear at this time, when you shall not see one Man in five that hath any Silk upon a Button, a great check to the Woollen-Manufacture.

And I doubt not but Pinion-Cloth hath wrought the same effects abroad, put People, in many places, upon setting up some Fabrick of their own.

A deceitful Commodity will soon bring its self out of esteem, and can never bear up against Experience.

The advantage we got upon the *Turks*, in the way of Barter at the first, is known only by private Persons, but the effect more publick at home, and the Cheat, paid to the Silk-man; as much deceit appearing in the opening of a Bail of Ardass Silk, as there could be in Pinion-Cloth, and conditional Bargains, for the most part, made in the Commodity.

And how unhappy must the consequence of this be, on both sides, to a Publick Good; when our Cloth is the only proper Commodity for the *Turks*, and their Silk altogether as useful to us? And how uneasie must Trade be carried on, when there is a mistrust and jealousy on both sides, where it can't well be managed but by a dependance upon Reputation and Honesty?

Another Argument of advantage to the Publick, arises from the greater consumption of Cloth that would be occasion'd hereby. If this Cloth were mark'd, and sold according to its merit, the Price of it thereby would be lessened; and it would come into many hands that can't now reach the Price of Cloth, and be avoided by others, that are now deceived by it, and hindered from good Fleece-Wool Cloth that they expected; and hereby the Price of Good Cloth would be more advanc'd than the other lessened, considering the quantity. And further, if this Cloth was mark'd, and well known amongst our selves, it would be sure to be sent abroad on its proper Errand. Should a Merchant send

send a quantity of Bays to *Russia*, his Intellect in Trade would be call'd in question in so cold a Climate; and the same, should a well-made Piece of Drab-Cloth, be sent into *Spain*. In like manner, Pinion loose Cloth may be much properer in *Spain* and *Portugal*, where it is made into loose Garments, that are not put to stress, than in *Russia*, where no Cloth can be too good to support in so frigid a Climate: And I may confidently affirm, that the decay and loss of that Trade is very much owing to Pinion bad Cloth; to retrieve which *Russia* Trade, there can be no properer undertaking, in pursuance of a Publick Good: But this will be crying stinking Fish abroad. The Golden Rule, we say, is to do as we would be done by. Should a Gentleman send his Servant into the Market to buy a Lamprey (a Fish of value) and he should be put upon with a Conger-Eel, and the Cheat discovered by the Master's Palate, would it not sit uneasy in his Stomach? or should *Compechia* or *Silvester* be sold for *Cachinelle*, being much alike, it would be a Cheat to the Buyer, altho' both of them will make a grain Colour, and the Price being proportioned to the merit of each, it can be no hindrance to either: And why is the *Tower* mark put upon Plate? Our reputation abroad, in this particular, is of greater value to the Interest of the Nation, than at home, contesting there with other Nations. Besides, how many Imprecations hath been power'd out upon us, by this occasion to the first, second, and third Generation, and the name of God blasphemed amongst the *Turks*, tho' us *Christians*? We read of the Primitive *Christians* in the Skins of wild Beasts, but lo! here are wild Beasts in the Skins of *Christians*, devouring *Turks* and *Armenians*: And how reflecting for an *Armenian* to turn *Turk*, and recover in this manner of a *Christian*; it hath, I think, loudly enough proclaim'd its quality, without a Cryer, and prov'd so snappish a Cur in our Ware-houses abroad, that it is not only our generous Interest, but necessity, to shew its Muzel, and *Salomon* decides the point, who tells us, *That Righteousness exalts a Nation*.

And this brings me gradually to the next part of our Bill, That all Cloth that is made of perfect Fleece-Wool, shall be mark'd with the Letters XXX Crown'd, which hath a little connexion with the last.

It is no less the subject of admiration than pity, and indeed notorious in fact, that the Woollen-Manufacture, which is (and hath

hath always been esteem'd) the Glory of our *English* Nation, should be thus imbas'd, and become the free subject of each Makers private Interest.

And whereas, thirty years last past, it was the study and great care, both of *Merchants* and *Clothier*; that the goodness of the Commodity should be preserved according to its Worthiness: Within this twenty years last past, the current of Trade hath run as violent in the contrary Channel; and that Clothier found the most encouragement in the *Merchants* way, that made it the most slight and deceitful; it is become almost a Cheat in its self, that it may thereby be made the subject of a greater, in its excessive straining of it; in both which particulars, we are now arrived to such perfection, that it's but reasonable to think, that this is the last parcel of Cloth we intend to sell the *Turks*.

A shame indeed, that such Cloth should be seen abroad, bearing the name of *English*.

I have seen Cloth that was sent to *Russia*, not many years since, that I am well assur'd, that a judicious Woollen Diaper would not give two shillings a yard for it, who knew its service. This now being become so general a Distemper, and experienced in all our Markets abroad, the sole design of this Article of our Bill, is first to redress the bad making of our Cloth at home, and then to rellise the same abroad by these signal Letters of Reformation, according to the ancient practice of *Edward the Sixth*, who commanded the same, by the Letter E Crown'd.

And altho', there is nothing propos'd in this Bill for Reformation, I hope it will be added by better judgment; the only offer I can make is the holding *Merchants* Cloth to a weight, and preventing the excessive straining of it.

The reputation of any Commodity is no small advantage to the sale of it, whilst we are in emulation abroad with other Nations: And were our care in improving the Woollen Manufacture answerable to the benign favour of Providence, in affording us means and encouragements, we must certainly out-shine the whole World in this excellent Commodity. But the management of the Woollen-Manufacture, to bring it to its due perfection, requires as great care, experience, and judgment, as any Commodity in the *English* Nation; and to have it undertaken by all sorts, that have not been duly and regularly brought up to it, is a great discouragement to the Trade it self, and those that

are

are industrious in it, and brings a great dis-reputation upon the Commodity it self. These abuses being regulated, we should build upon a sure foundation, and the very *Turks* may become sharers in our late deliverance.

And this brings me to the last part of our Bill, that all long Cloth shall be made of one limited length.

It appears in former Statutes *, that it was as great * *Quarto*
a Penalty for making Cloth too long as too short. *Jacobi cap.*

In the first place, We find it a great ease in Trade, by a customary Sale of our *Merchants* Cloth, at so much the whole Cloth, it prevents many inconveniencies in the difficulty of measure, and there can be no preservation of this, but by the exactest certainty that we can arrive to in our lengths. And should we once break bounds in this particular, there would be no stop, the *Merchants* desire would grow larger than our *Timber* to make Stocks to mill the Cloth, and we should only hereby endeavour to supplant each other in Trade, by giving privately a little farther allowance herein.

And in the next place, many parts of the wages belonging to the Trade, having a long time been settled at so much by the Cloth, it will come hard upon the laborious part of the Trade; and it would likewise be too heavy a burthen to our Pack-Horses, in so long a Journey. And I think this grievance wants little more ground for Reformation, having been already tedious: And thus much for what particularly relates to our Bill.

Several Objections arise against our Bill, but the most plausible, That it will ruin all the little Clothiers, if they are forc'd to come up to sell small quantities of Cloth.

The making of a less quantity of Cloth than a Bail, which is five Cloths, and in value thirty five or forty Pounds in the *Merchants* way, is an Obstruction to the Sale. The Factorage of these is five and twenty Shillings: This being saved, it will very well bear the charge of the Journey. And Experience shews us, that few little Clothiers, that now make any Cloth, but do come up with their Cloth, altho' they save nothing by their Journey; and there could not be one Journey in two saved, as it's now managed.

The trial of advantage or loss, to little Clothiers, in this case, must chiefly depend, between the kindness of the *Merchant*, and the

the kindness of the Factor. If a *Merchant* buy five Cloths of a little Clothier, and in kindness to him, order him to make five more as good, and send them up to him, and draw a Bill upon him for the Money; the kindness of the *Merchant* in going to *Blackwell-Hall*, and ordering the Hall-Keeper to send them in to him, will as well save a Clothier a Journey as the Factor; and if half the Factorage be allowed on the Price to the *Merchant*, it will be felt.

And if Trade was in the old Channel, that Cloth was sold for ready Money, the little Clothier need not fear the Sale of his Cloth in a time of demand for Cloth; if he came up in a dull time, a little abatement would always find ready Money; and if he had his Money, and made but the same quantity of Cloth again, the Money earned by his Family out of the Cloth would be considerable. And the Factor can do no more to sell Cloth in a dull time, than the Clothier himself. But, quoth the Factor, we then lend the Clothier Money: This, by the rule *Salomon*; at the first stroke, inverts the order, and puts the Servant in the Master's place, who tells us, That the *Borrower* is Servant to the *Lender*; and from whence this Money came, I shall not inquire: This smelt a little of the Cask to the Committee. This kindness is like a Bucket of Water to a dry Pump, only to set a stream going, which will soon bring the poor Clothier into a *Diabetes*. The Money will be sure to be wanting at such a time that his Price must be beaten down, to procure it, or the Factor become *Merchant*, which is worse. What *Laocoon* observ'd of the *Grecians*, may be very serviceable to us in an offer'd kindness from a Factor, *Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes*: Some private design being at the end of it; and I wholly submit herein to the Experience that these Clothiers have found.

Many miserable Instances have appear'd of late years at the death of those Clothiers that are in this way of Trade, which would be too tedious to relate; as in the Case of *Arundel* and *Gardiner*, in the County of *Glocester*, the one making eight or ten Cloths a Week; and the other twelve or fourteen, both dying in this flourishing Trade; the one left not above one hundred Pounds to his own Relation, and the other never paid his own just Debts in the Country.

Another

Another tumultuous Clamour arises against our Bill, from the Pinion Interest, pursuing the exact measures of *Demetrius*, the Silver-smith, foot by foot. *Sir*, ye know by this Craft we have our Wealth; our Craft is in danger of being set at naught; and all the Interest crieth out for two hours, *Great is Diana of the Ephorians*: In like manner, when Pinion-Cloth was like to be mark'd in good earnest.

This narrow-spirited Interest, like a drowning Man, catcheth at every sprig to preserve it self. *Sir*, Its impossible to make course Cloth to hold six Quarters: This exactness will ruine our Trades that make course Cloth. If this Bill pass, I must turn off all my Weavers; and in this great tumult and concourse, mercenary Messengers were dispatch'd with all Expedition to all Quarters, with blank Papers to get Subscriptions to the Factors Petition to the Parliament; in which hot Enterprize, some of the Undertakers (doubtless hoping their Wages would rise according to their Subscriptions) perswaded many of the ignorant Work People, it was to suppress the *Blackwell-Hall* Factors, and thereby prevail'd.

Learned *Tully*, who was a true Patriot of his Country, heartily wish'd, that every Man's Estate might be proportion'd to his good to the Publick. Should *Tully's* wish prevail, it would make a strange Metamorphosis in our days.

I think now I can't be thought altogether impertinent in an indifferent Essay (keeping within the compass of my promise) whilst we are under the sensible pressures of our own neglect and folly.

Nothing hath more impoverish'd this Nation, than the loss of our Wool into *France*, and the extraordinary growth of so many Wool-brogers in the City of *London*, *Southwark*, and adjacent places. I think 'em therefore fit to be treated upon together, from their acquaintance: The loss of our Wool being an immediate loss to our selves, and advance to *France*; the quantity may be better made out by other hands, but upon all accounts very considerable; the value of our loss in ordinary Wool, is above the worth of the Wool in the Manufacture; in Worsted Wool, made into Stockings, fine Stuffs, Druggets, and the like, four or five times the value of the Wool; the meeting us abroad at Markets with our own Growth, the encouraging their own Wool, by a mixture of ours,

and working so much cheaper in *France*, had need of a better Arithmetician for the summing it up.

The Wool-brogger, in being instrumental to the imbasing the Woollen Manufacture, and losing its reputation abroad; as likewise (if many Men are not mistaken) in forwarding the former.

The beginning of which growing mischief, (evidently in the Wool-brogger, and, I think, impliedly in the other) I compute from the 20th of King James the First, where I find a repeal of the good Statute of Edward the Sixth, Anno quinto, cap. 7. that had continued in force Seventy years. The effect of which, I think, may be described in the patheticall Complaint of the Poet in a like case.

*Fugere pudor, cerumq; fidesq;
In quorum subire locum fraudeq; dolus,
Insidieq; & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi.* Ovid.

The condition of the English Nation (by the Preamble of the Statute of Edward the Sixth, Anno quinto, cap. 6.) seems to run parallel with our present times, where it is thus expres'd, *That many Clothiers, for lack of Knowledge and Experience, and some of extream Covetousness, do daily more and more study rather to make many, than to make good Cloths, having more respect to their private Commodity and Gain, than the advancement of Truth, and continuance of the Commodity, in estimation according to the worthiness of it, have, and do daily, instead of Truth, practise Falshood; and instead of substantial making of Cloth, do practise slight and slender making of Cloth, by mingling Fell-Wool and Lambs-Wool, &c.* No such thing as Pinions in those days.

After a due care taken in that Statute to preserve the Reputation of the Woollen-Manufacture, by the best means that could be then thought of, consulting all Artificers in the Trade, followed the Statute I now mention, where all Persons were strictly prohibited from buying any Wool, upon a double Forfeiture of the value of the said Wool, unless they spun it into a Yarn, or made it into some sort of Manufacture; and no Clothier to have any assistance in buying of Wool, but by Servants, abiding in his Mansion-House, which Statute was made in those days with a great deal of debate and consideration, as appears by a remarkable

able Clause in the said Statute, which is almost singular, that the King, by his Proclamation, should Dissolve the Act of Parliament. After five Years Experience, there was an Appeal made to the Parliament, by the Inhabitants of the Town of *Hallifax*, where dwelt a considerable number of poor Traders, that could not buy Horses to fetch in their Wool, but had always been accustomed to buy small parcels of the Wool-Drivers, and carry it home upon their heads; and they desir'd the same liberty again, which, upon particular consideration, I find, was obtained, but the Statute more strictly confirm'd in the general; and those Wool-drivers of *Hallifax* were strictly limited to that Town, upon a double forfeiture of their Wool; as appears by the Statute of *Philip and Mary*; *Secundo & tertio Phil. & Mariae, cap. 13.*

Which is plain demonstration, that they found a benefit to the Publick, by that Statute which afterwards continued in force all the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, and to the twentieth of King *James*, and then Repealed. The strictness of which Statute, and extraordinary Penalty of Forfeiture of double the value of the said Wool, and remarkable caution, that the Clothier should have no assistance in buying of Wool, but by his own immediate Servants, seems to provide against this double mischief: First the imbasing of our Cloth; Wool being a Commodity that will shelter more deceit than the wariest Buyer can discover, as was never better known than at this day.

In the next place, it seems to fence against the Exportation of our Wool.

It's very evident, that had we no Recettters, we could not be liable to these *French Thieves*; no *French Man* could come and buy Wool openly.

The buying of Wool being strictly confin'd to the Manufactures, it's unlikely, upon several considerations, that they should be concerned in this practice; nay, I think, almost impracticable: First, the remoteness of their living from the places that are proper for this purpose, as *Sussex* and the like, no Clothing parts being within fifty Miles of it, and thereby incapable of waiting for seasonable times, for the delivery of it to *French Shalops*.

In the next place, This Wool must be paid for by *French Bills*, or by some *French Man* living in *London*: This way is very difficult to be found out, and adjusted by one that is a Stranger at *Lon-*

don; and the practice it self is directly contrary to the Interest of their own Trades: It is not time ill spent, when we are sending against an Enemy, to consider which way we are like least to be attack'd.

How fair now doth all this come to hand with these Wool-brogers, living in *London*, and adjacent places? They buy up all the Wool that grows fair for the practice, as *Rumney-Marsh, &c.* Afterwards they pack it up, and leave it at the Breeders Houses, until conveniencies of sending for it: This being ready pack'd up, how easie is it to let some part be brought to *London*, and the other to a *French* Shalop: The buying part is in their own way, and can give no mistrust; the bringing part for *London*, a shelter to the other for *France*. Communication with *French-Men* at *London*, to adjust opportunities of meeting at an exact time, and any correspondence in *France*, by Letters of Commerce without notice, *French* Bills which usually come over, at double usance, as well to be managed by them in point of time, as is possible: And that they have been concerned in this practice, I think, is evident by the appearance of a double quantity of Wool in their hands. At the beginning of our *French* Wars Wool was not cheaper to incourage it in the Buying part: The dulness of Trade gave opportunities of trusting greater quantities to their old Traders; and nothing, I think, but a back door stop'd could occasion it.

Here are a considerable Party of Men that flourish like *Solomon's* Lillies, that neither toyl nor spin, that only get a Profit out of the Wool, and no way incourage the Woollen-Manufacture; but on the contrary, a Pack of Wool carried forty Miles backwards and forwards, will not make the more Cloth at the Journeys end, I wish I could say it would not make less. No Farmer that hath long Wool, that is fit for Combing, and short Wool that is fit for Clothing, but may easily have it divided, either by Clothier or Comber. And in carrying on any considerable Trade in the Nation, it seems a fair question to know, What good to the Publick?

By an Artificer at Mouse-Traps, we have a security to our Cheese and Bacon: By an Engineer at Pigs-Rings, a check to the mischievous nature of the Swine: By an Artist at Save-alls, a thrifty help to make the most of the Candle: The Scavenger and Goldfinder are useful in their proper Seasons; but *Qui bono*, these

these Men? their usefulness to the Publick is much like that of the Hedge-Hog: they wrap themselves up in warm Wool, and prick the Fingers of all their *English* Traders.

The true Spring of all substantial Commerce, ought to arise from a real benefit that accrues thereby to the Publick, either immediately to our selves, or which is serviceable to other Parts, and thereby brings home an advantage, and the undoubted order of the great Creator of the Universe, who did nothing in vain.

The private ingrossing of Commodities, to no other end than to advance the Price, is only a Private Interest preying upon the Publick; and I think the same reason to prevent Ingrossing Materials in Trade, as it is in the concern of Life; this being but one degree a remoter cause. To instance at present in *Cochinele* and *Indigo*, both which are very material Commodities in the present course of the Woollen-Manufacture, and both these Commodities lately Ingrossed, and thereby the Prices very much Inhand'd. The advantage of this is only to the Ingrossers.

A pound of *Cochinele* will make no better a colour coming out of their hands, after advanc'd ten or fifteen Shillings, than when they took it in: This extraordinary profit must be made good by the Publick; and indeed this Year it hath been an extraordinary check to fine Cloth,

Nay, to come nearer, great part of this private Profit hath been made good by the Officers of our Army, that fight for our security, and the lustre of the Colour, weakened by their private Profit. Were the practice of Ingrossing Foreign Commodities nearly considered, it will appear to be an advantage to Foreign Parts, and a weakning of our selves: When a Foreign Commodity, by this means, is advanc'd here, that which follows, the Price is advanc'd abroad, and only an encouragement to a dronish Interest at home, that hereby preys upon the Publick, and a Stock that lieth lurking for this purpose, kept out of Trade, where it might do good; which is a Grievance upon the Woollen-Manufacture, which, I hope, will be Redress'd.

The Experience of the Growth of *France* will, I hope, quicken our Care in the reviving of the Statute of *Edward* the Sixth; which for its worth to the publick Good, deserveth to be wrote in Letters of Gold; and that the severity of the Statute against Ex-

porta-

portation of Wool will be turned into the full Reward of the value of the Wool to the Seizer or Discoverer, with the least trouble that can be contrived: And that any Person or Persons that shall be found aiding or assisting in the Design of Exportation of Wool, shall be liable to so many Years Imprisonment: The one (is evident) hath not answered its end in a true meaning; and on the other hand, nothing like a clear Reward to quicken Diligence.

And for a Proof of the Repeal of the Statute of *Edward the Sixth*, could the Gentlemen in *Sussex* truly inform themselves of the Price of their Wool in the flourishing time of *Queen Elizabeth*, and compare it with twenty years last past, I dare say they would be for having this Statute revived, notwithstanding their saimness to Exportation: And to argue that if these Wool-Brogers did not buy their Wool, it would remain upon their Hands unfold, is but short-sighted Reasoning. If a Clothier in *Wiltshire* could buy Wool a Farthing in a Pound cheaper in *Sussex* than his own County, his love to his Country would not sway that Interest, if he had the free command of his own Stock. And to desire such Assistance as this in a dull time of Trade (which hath always its Ebbings and Flowings) is no other than the desire of a draught of cold Drink in a High Fever, which will return with double Vigour the next Fit; and People in such a hear ought to have some care took of them.

And no need of an Argument to prove the Sway of private Interest, when it shall openly appear to procure a free Exportation of our Wool, and be willing freely to part with so valuable a Jewel; whose Intellect must be greatly informed, did they consider the low condition of the Nation, when our Wool was carried abroad to be Manufactured, before the days of *Edward the Third*, when the Government was chiefly supported by a Duty paid out of our Wool Exported; and when fourteen pound of

Wool was sold here for eighteen-Pence*; when the Subjects of *Edward I.* were so much grieved at the Toll they payed out of their Wool, of Forty Shillings for every Sack†; and when there was a Subsidy granted to *Edward III.* of the ninth Fleece, the ninth Lamb, and the ninth Sheaf, to carry on a War in *France**. In those days, when our Wool was carried abroad to be Manufactured, and Trade had brought home no better ways of raising of Money. And

* *Vicesimo quinto Hen. 8.*
ca. 13.

† *Vicesimo quinto Edw. 1.*
ca. 7.

* *Decimo quarto Edw. 3.* ca. 20.

the extraordinary care of *Edward the Third* to encourage the Manufacturing of it here; by allowing Cloth-workers of a strange Land more Priviledge than his own Subjects: The encrease of which, hath plainly encreas'd the Riches of this Nation, a Jewel of greater Value than rightly understood, according to the Judgment of Famous *Coke*, who computes that Nine Parts in Ten of our exported Commodities do come from the Sheeps Back. The Value of Wool indeed is not enough understood amongst us, or at least too little considered; a Commodity capable of being converted to almost any Use, and adapted to the Humour and Usefulness of hot and cold Climates; and still carrying a true Merit with it, not only the Bread of the Nation, but, like *Sampson's* Locks, in it consists our Strength and Security; our Foreign Trade depending upon the Woollen-Manufacture, and our Shipping our Bulwarks; and if People are our Riches, and Forrage as well the Support of a War, as the Soldiers that fight the Battle, both ought jointly to be considered: And that we want People in this Nation, I think admits no question. I will pass by the Consideration of the immediate Advantage to our selves in the employment of the laborious part of the Nation, and thereby affecting the Value of the other Produce of the Ground, and the Usefulness and Beauty to our selves, in so good and genteel a Clothing, and only take notice of its kind Effects that it brings us from abroad.

And first of all, (that Right may take place) from *Turky*, by the Honourable *Levant Company*, abundance of Raw Silk, Grograins, Yarn, Cotton-Wool; all which are useful Commodities, and employ numerous hands here. From *Hamburg, Germany*, and *Flanders*, all sorts of Linens suitable to all Occasions. From *Spain* and the *West-Indies*, our Bullion, Spanish-Wool, Corn, Cochinele. From *Russia, Danzack*, and the East Country, Potashes, Flax, Hemp, useful to our Shipping, all substantial and needful Commodities; by which the Merchants fetch the Money from the Nobility and Gentry, in a substantial Circulation of Affairs; not Humm-Humms, and Moll-Mulls, Callicoës and Muslings for borrowed Bullion. 'Twas never well with this Nation since we have endeavour'd so much to make a shew without substance; and built Castles in the Air for Stock-jobbings. And if so many Advantages to the Nation, and so excellent a crop of Fruit from

from this fair Tree, how reflecting is the neglect of it, when the Suckers and useless Scyons over-top the true Branches, and a seeming Contest between the Sons of the Bond-woman and the Free?

Nor is it inconsiderable how far the Artificers in the Woollen-Manufacture do otherwise contribute to the Support of the Government.

These are those good Subjects that chiefly delight in the Society of the Indian Weed, measuring time by the Pipe; and will sooner suffer a Famine in the Cupboard than the Box; which in a plenty time of Trade is too good a Shoe-horn to the Liquid Excise; many of these chusing rather to wear their Hands by hard Labour than part with their Liquor: An Advantage as well to the Crown as the Farmer.

And as our Woollen-Manufacture (arising out of the Country) doth yield these good Advantages, and bring us home these necessary Commodities; and likewise the chief Dependance of our Trade at home, is upon the Consumption of these Commodities amongst our selves, (little Goods brought to *England* that is carried to other Dominions, and an Advantage thereby, as in *Holland*. I wish I could say we had all our own at the first Hand: And if I had enough of Father *Latimer's* Gravity to make a With, it should be confin'd to the narrow compass of a Nutmeg, to rub my Toast that was brought to *England* at the first Hand.) This must likewise receive its Life, and ebb and flow, according to the Revenue of our Land: The Streams can't rise higher than the Fountain: As our Wool encreases, our Trade; as our Trade encreases, our People: And what the witty *Cowley* proposeth in his Agriculture, To have one Colledge in each University appropriated to the encouragement of Husbandry, hath much reason in it: And had he added the Shepherds Crook to his Plough in the Field Arable, it had certainly been the proper Arms of *England*.

The Value of the whole Nation at this time, I dare say, is one fifth part lost for want of Skill to manure, and Money to Stock it. Ill Husbandry is the Offspring of Poverty. To find out the true cause of this, the Gentleman must leave the City, and come to his ancient Mansion-House in the Country; where he will find but Five hundred Sheep upon a Farm, that if manured to the height would keep Seven.

In short, The City hath so drained the Country, that there is not Money enough left to make the most of Estates. And although we have had a better Advantage than our Fore-Fathers in the Return of our Money by Bills of Exchange, (a neat and secure way of doing of Business,) it were better for the Country if they run the same Hazard that they did. This Practice hath brought the Waller too much upon one side; the City is cumbersome by its bigness, and the Country starved.

But I return to the Woollen-Manufacture: out of which there is, upon modest Computation, One hundred thousand Pounds *per Annum*, carried away by those Persons that no way encourage it: who live splendidly, and neither plough nor sow, which possibly may be their proper part. How valuable this is to a publick Good to have such a dead Weight hanged upon the Master-wheel of our Trade, when we are in Competition with other Nations, is beyond my Arithmetick, and doubles, in my Thoughts, as the price of a Horse at a Penny a Nail. Whatsoever unnecessary Charge we suffer to clog this Commodity, is plainly a hindrance to the publick Good: And if that Duty that is now paid out of our Cloth Exported was doubled to the Crown some way or other upon Importation, it might be our Advantage. This is but shoeing our Horse with Lead (the Simile being at hand) that is to run for our Plate.

And here I cannot pass by the Glory of the Aulnage Court without a little Observation: its large Revenue arising out of the Woollen-Manufacture. This Court having made fairer Footsteps to Arbitrary Power in the later times, than the High-Commission-Court could attain to. These Aulnagers first seized Cloth, then laid Fines, heard their own Causes, and determined; and whatsoever they impos'd was effectual Execution before you had your Goods: nay, their under Officers made their own Fees: Every Jackdaw and Rooke will steal a Lock from the poor Sheeps Back to make his Nest easie.

And as the *East-India* Company with their Stock, resolv'd to have one Cloth go for two; as Aulnagers, willing enough to have two Cloths, Forrels and all, at the old Price of one, as Merchants.

chants. *Caninus appetitu*, needs a Physician. These prevail'd two Years, and resolv'd to carry all before them, (being still flush'd with Success at the Exchequer-Bar;) they seiz'd Forty long Cloths of one Man's that would not comply with their Arbitrary Proceedings, of the value of Four hundred Pounds, and kept them almost a Year, the matter in dispute being only Ten Shillings; and one Cloth might have been Pledge enough, had they not herein shewn their Power and Arbitrary Greatness; the best Warehouse in Town at this time for Woollen Goods.

All at this Court went current on their sides, being Judge and Jury both: And where they said the Hares Ears must go for Horns, as in the Creation it was, so Hats, Stockings, Stuffs, Serges; nay, in our mulish Commodities, the Wool must bear the Sway, and all summoned to Court, and accordingly appear'd. They had scarce pass'd by the Kitching-Maids Mopps being made of Wool, had not the sharpness of *Joan's* Temper scald'd 'em, and a liquid Entertainment at the Summons, and indeed built upon valuable Consideration. Wages without Work is the way to make Men arbitrary and imperious. Could the Fleece of the Devil be manufactured, when he was to appear upon the Earth; or *Mahomet* in the likeness of a Ram, you may have a Seal at this Office, to shew it to be a current Commodity, and one better or other in Four and twenty, to make a Cloth-mark, was there any thing to be got by it. But this Subject hath been well explained, and I hope we are near a Deliverance.

*Ecce iterum
Crispinus &
est mihi sepe
vocandus Ad
partes. Juv.*

The last thing I humbly offer (having, I doubt, been too tedious already) being of great concern to the Publick, and a check to the Woollen Manufacture, was the breaking the Company of Merchant-Adventurers.

It evidently appear'd to the Observation of the most considerate makers of Cloth, that had a dependance upon the *Hamburg* Trade, that the breaking of that Company in former days, was a very destructive Act to the Clothing Trade; and from that very time Reputation in the Cloth Trade began to decline; and the Substantial Credit that had been many Years maintained.

tained in a regular fair Trade, shipping off Cloth constantly twice or three times a Year was soon interlop'd away.

This was introduc'd by a great pretence of the Dog in the Manger, and colour of Reformation and Amendment of Trade (*à la mode* at that time) which soon appear'd in its true Effects like the rest; and the same Cloth that was sold at Twelve Pounds *per* Cloth, was soon brought down to Ten; and since by degrees, to Nine, matter of Fact and to be proved.

The Clothiers that were prevail'd upon (by the great Reformers) to Petition for it, were gratified in their desire: exactly like the Frogs, who petitioned to *Jupiter* for a new King, making a great complaint of the dulness of the Beam that he first sent them: and to satisfy their desire in the contrary, he sent them the Stork. The Truth of this Simile is very well remembered at this day, by the extraordinary Abatements, cheat in measure, only the middle of the Cloth paid for by some, and enough sharp'd out of the Clothier to maintain the Interloper *Kitchin*, as was reckoned in the height of those times. But these Merchants were in great measure supplanted themselves, in a short time, by another sort of Merchants that here-by sprung up, that are one degree worse than the Stork. And could not the Devil appear in any Shape, and only known, they say, by his Cloven Foot, one could never believe to have met a Factor in this Station; and yet too true to make a Jest. Here will be large Thongs cut out of the publick Hides to encourage his Commissions from abroad; and lumping Penny-worths of Cloth sent out; and let the King beware of his Customs when Factors sell Nutmegs.

One would have thought it impossible for two such opposite Interests to be undertaken by the same Hand; (but this difficult point meeting with so great Integrity and vast Parts, the *Delphian* Oracle, by the secret whispers of his Lips,) is kept as upright as Justice it self. But it evidently appears, that the Man is at great pains to do it, for he is forc'd to chew all his Words before he delivers them out, that one Interest may be kept private from the other; if not, there would be such

gents here, upon the Clothier, and have no strict regard to the true merit and excellency of our *English* Cloth. It hereby follows, that our Cloth is much imbas'd, which is the best means to prefer the Cloth of their own Nation, and steal the Trade from us.

The Clothiers care in good making of Cloth in former days, was evidently preserved by the good judgment of the *Hamburg* Merchants; and thereby we kept the Trade from the *Dutch* and other Nations: The lowest Price of *English* Cloth is hereby well known abroad. Nay, these Packers and Factors having got the Sale of Cloth wholly into their hands (and this found out by Foreign Traders) these are the fittest Men, upon several Considerations, to be employ'd. The Packer hath an advantage in his own Trade, and a little Commission will serve; but these Packers and Factors hereby, being put upon Vying one with another who shall get the most Commissions; which must be by the best Pennyworth. Cloth is brought one Scotch lower than the Merchant himself could do; and, I think, a very great disgrace to the *English* Nation, that our blind side is found out by every —

The quantity of Cloth Exported by the old Company of Merchant-Adventurers, compar'd with what hath been sent out these late Years in this Channel of Trade, together with the Price then and now, is both proof and motive to an establishment of a new *Hamburg* Company, and the privileges that the *English* Merchants enjoy at the City of *Hamburg*, are too great to be slighted.

And if any neglect (in former days) by the Company, in not sending the Cloth, near enough for the accommodation of the Buyer (which is wisely to be considered; a Piece of well-made *English* Cloth not to be sent a begging, and the value maintain'd by a wise distance) that fault is very easie to be mended; *Et felix quem facit.*

A regular management of Trade, by Companies, is upon several considerations; The unquestionable Interest of the *English*

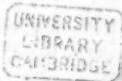
English Nation, as in keeping up its grandure at home : so likewise the Price and Value of our Cloth abroad : overstocking of a Market will presently beat down the value of a Commodity ; and this can never be well gaged by private hands. It is true, That publick Companies may make themselves of ill use to the Nation, if they let their private Interest interlope upon the Publick, and endeavour, by the delay of Shippings, to keep up the Price of Cloth too high abroad, and thereby the cheaper at home, as likewise, in the effects of Cloth : This will enrich a few, and impoverish multitudes. The true Interest of the *English* Nation consists in a free current of a regular Trade, managed with moderate Profit, and a true merit in the Commodity to preserve a good Credit abroad, with a vigilant care at home to encourage the proper effects of those places that are most servicable to us in taking off our Woollen-Manufacture, by laying a good Duty upon the Commodities that herein interfere, and are brought home with our Bullion. As great a mischief as ever, I think, happened to the Woollen-Manufacture, was the great quantity of *Bengal-Silk* brought home by the *East-India* Company ; it visibly made such a stop in the Cloth-Trade, that many poor People were hereby Starved for want of Employment.

And the clearness of this doth strangely reflect upon those *Turky*-Merchants that send Money to *Turky*, to bring home thereby the more Silk ; a false step in that Trade, which, I think, hath been wholly occasion'd by the loss of our Credit abroad in our Cloth, and only to help a *Lame Dog* over the *Stile* : And no wonder, at the just Complaint of the Farmer, when each Man's Rule in Trade hath been his own choice, and the true Interest of the Nation for this thirty or forty years, like *Pallianurus*, who slept at the Helm *

* *Gallico somno aut canino.*

And thus, I have humbly offered, (in an home-spun *Stile*) a true account of the present management and abuses crept into the Clothing-Trade, without prejudice or design ; wherein, if no redress, it will be a fair removal of the blame ; being
very

very much encouraged hereunto, by the numerous and repeated Acts of Parliament, made in former days, and the signal care of the Woollen-Manufacture, by our Ancestors, in minding the highest Rank of our Council, by the very seats they late on : And doubt not of your honourable consideration and distinguishing care of the Country, whereby alone, the Glory of our *English* Nation may be advanc'd, and we may be some eclipse again to the Great Monarch *Lewis le Grand*; having, of late years, furnish'd him with Wings to fly out of his own Territories, abounding in *Pontacque* and *Nants-Brandy*, and Owl'd out of the Treasure of our Wool, Fullers-Earth, and Timber; our care in which particulars, will lessen the Glory of *France*, as well in Peace as War.



F I N I S
